

FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

What does the indicator tell us?

This indicator identifies the percentage of river miles and lake acres for which fish consumption advisories have been issued. A total of 46 states have issued fish consumption advisories. Information obtained by EPA's Office of Science and Technology from state reporting efforts indicates that one or more fish consumption advisories have been issued for 14 percent of the Nation's lake acres and 4 percent of the Nation's river miles.

States issue fish consumption advisories to warn recreational and subsistence anglers and other members of the public of the risks associated with consuming contaminated noncommercial fish. A fish consumption advisory may involve one or more of the following warnings: (1) do not eat any fish caught in a certain area; (2) eat only a specified limited amount of fish, particularly if you are in a high-risk group (e.g., pregnant women or young children); or (3) eat fish only after special preparation.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is responsible for protecting consumers from contaminants in fish sold through interstate commerce.

How will the indicator be used to track progress?

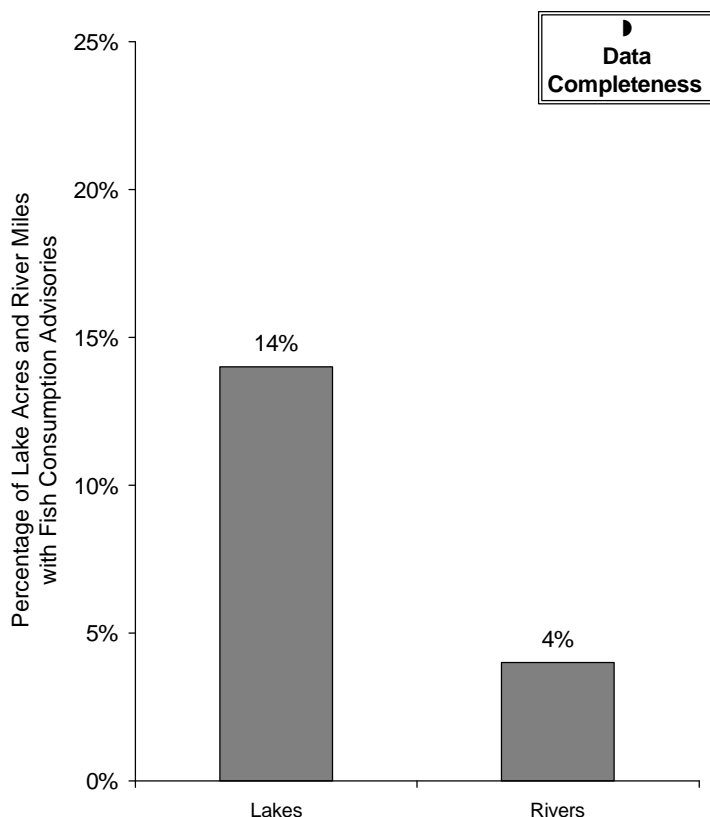
States provide EPA with information on fish consumption advisories. EPA collects and stores this information in the National Listing of Fish Consumption Advisories, which is updated annually. The database is used to map advisories by

pollutant on a national, regional, state, and watershed basis. It helps identify the risks posed by a particular chemical on a geographic basis and could be used to target control, remediation, and risk management programs to high-risk areas.

What is being done to improve the indicator?

EPA is increasing the scope of the fish advisory program to include information on advisories for turtles, frogs, and waterfowl. The expanded database will be known as the National Listing of Fish and Wildlife

INDICATOR 5: Fish Consumption Advisories



Source: State data reported to EPA's Office of Science and Technology, 1994

Consumption Advisories. Other improvements to the information system include listing the total river miles and lake acres under advisory and automatically calculating the percentage of waters covered by state-issued fish consumption advisories for 37 particular contaminants, including mercury, dioxin, chlordane, PCBs, and DDT. In addition, the information system will overlay county and major city lines and index the advisories with a code for the stream or river segment to enable integration of the National Listing with other geographic information systems. The 1995 update will be available on CD-ROM, diskette, or the Internet.

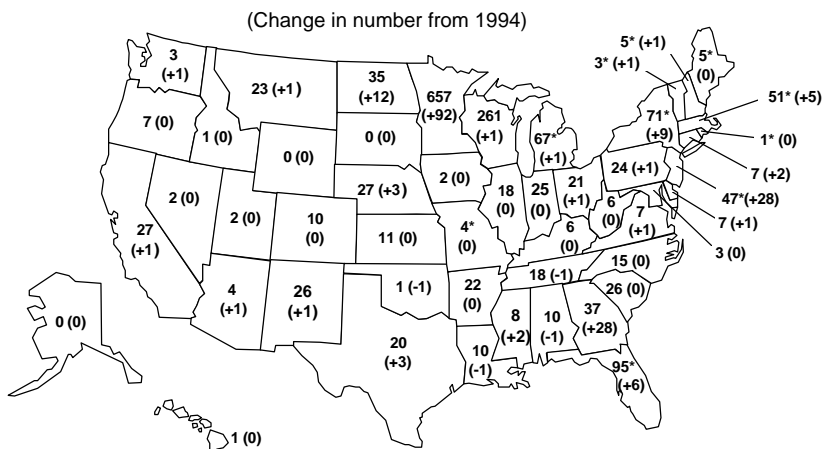
To improve the comparability and consistency of state-issued fish consumption advisories and accuracy in reporting, EPA has published guidance for states to use in developing advisories and in notifying recreational and subsistence anglers of potential risk from contaminated fish. EPA periodically sponsors conferences and technical training sessions, and serves as a national clearing-house for related information to assist states with their fish advisory programs.

EPA also is working with the states to link information from state agencies that issue fish consumption advisories with the information other state agencies provide on attainment of the fish and shellfish consumption designated use, gathered in compliance with section 305(b) of the Clean Water Act. This approach should result in more consistent information on fish consumption issues.

What is being done to improve conditions measured by the indicator?

Fish can become contaminated because of proximity to (1) a hazardous waste site, (2) a discharge outfall, (3) a chemical spill, (4) a public recreation area, or (5) a nonpoint

Number of Fish Advisories Issued by Each State in 1995



Note: This map depicts the number of waterbodies, by state, where fish consumption advisories were in effect in 1995 based on information reported to EPA by the states. Because of the variability of the information reported, the numbers depicted here do not reflect the geographic extent of chemical contamination of fish tissue in each state nor the extent of a state's monitoring efforts. An asterisk (*) denotes a state that has issued statewide advisories for particular pollutants or types of waterbodies.

source. Pollutants from these sources can also collect and persist in sediment and bioaccumulate through the food chain, becoming a potential hazard to aquatic life and human health.

As a result, EPA is working with its partners to place further restrictions on pollution from point sources, clean up Superfund sites, improve containment of accidental spills, and reduce nonpoint source pollution. These efforts should reduce the incidence of contaminated fish.

EPA is also developing a guidance document on managing the risks associated with fish consumption. The document will help states and tribes reduce loadings of high-risk chemicals to water and sediment. It will also provide guidance on the types of actions that states and tribes can take to reduce the risks to particularly susceptible individuals.

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